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GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

DATE: April 9, 2010
TO: Public Space Committee
FROM: Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner
SUBJECT: 3920 Alton Place, NW

APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Applicant: Kal Kamel (Authorized Agent)

Location: This site is located on the south side of Alton Place, near the corners of Nebraska Avenue NW, Yuma Street NW and Wisconsin Avenue NW. It is located in a R-1-B zoning district. The surrounding neighborhood has few, if any, curb cuts, and off-street parking is predominantly accessed through an alley. However, the west end of this block (Square 1779) does not have access to an alley.

Proposal: The applicant is requesting a new curb cut and driveway in the public space at the Wisconsin Avenue Baptist Church.

BACKGROUND

The Office of Planning received the public space application for review on March 16, 2010.

BASIS OF REPORT

The Office of Planning (OP) has reviewed the application, considered existing site and adjacent site conditions, visited the site, completed research on the site to prepare this report, and coordinated with staff in the Development Review Division. There are several policies in the Comprehensive Plan and DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual that relate to this application:

Comprehensive Plan

Policy UD-2.2 Designing for Successful Neighborhoods

The sense of place in the Districts neighborhoods is a function of their cultural history, physical features and visual qualities. This is especially evident in both historic row house neighborhoods as well as single family neighborhoods where particular set backs, architectural styles, and building forms prevail. In neighborhoods of high architectural quality and strong identity, a greater emphasis on design compatibility and appropriate scale is needed.

Policy UD-2.2.1 Neighborhood Character and Identity

Strengthen the defining visual qualities of Washington's neighborhoods. This should be achieved in part by relating the scale of infill development, alterations, renovations and additions to existing neighborhood context.

Action UD-3.1-C: DDOT Public Space Permits

Ensure that all public space permits, including but not limited to permits for dumpsters, electric wiring, tree removal, excavation, parking, fences, retaining walls, signs and banners, sidewalk cafés, curb cuts, and special displays, are not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and contribute to the policies laid out ... for the use of street space.

DCMR Title 11: Zoning

In the zoning regulations, the minimum width for a driveway on private property serving a single-family residential unit or some other single parking space is 7 feet and driveways serving all other uses or more than one parking space must be a minimum of 12 feet wide for one-way circulation and 14 feet wide for two-way circulation. (ZO-2117.8).

DDOT Design and Engineering Manual

Residential driveways should have a minimum 12 foot width within the public space area, and the driveway apron should be flared (Type D, DDOT Standards Drawing Number 504.04) or have a maximum radius of 6 feet.(DEM 31.4.3.1).

KEY ISSUES

The proposal is for a new curb cut and driveway to be installed on the south side of the property on Yuma Street NW. The proposed driveway is 20' wide and 28' in length. The proposed width of the driveway is too narrow. It must be a minimum of 12' for one-way traffic and 24' for two-way traffic. The vehicular access routes being accessed on private property via the proposed the curb cut do not appear to meet the minimum width standards required. There is an existing curb cut and driveway at the north side of the property on Alton Place NW. The applicant does not provide any justification as to why an additional curb cut and driveway are needed.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The vehicular access routes being accessed on private property via the proposed curb cut do not appear to meet minimum width standards. In addition, the proposed curb cut and driveway will reduce green space and permeable surface as well as disrupt pedestrian movement on Yuma Street NW.

The Office of Planning recommends this application be denied.